

It's 4:30 pm a few Tuesdays ago, and I found myself in a typical Tuesday, which means it's a weekly dose of chaos. My Tuesdays begin early in the morning and get going when I drop my daughter off at school. I then rush over here, to the church, and sit in the room right off the sanctuary, from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm, with back-to-back meetings. Then, I rush back to pick my daughter up from school and go home.

My wife, Lindsay, teaches classes at USF on Tuesdays, which means I'm solo parenting throughout the early evening. So, when I get home, it's full speed. I'm serving snacks and helping with homework. This inevitably means that I'm spending at least 15 minutes on YouTube trying to figure out how to divide fractions. They changed math, by the way, did you know that? I'm getting dinner on the table, tidying up the house, finishing whatever dishes are in the sink, and all this before I head back down to the church for an elder meeting that starts at 7:00 pm and hopefully ends before midnight, and I'm only partly kidding.

This particular Tuesday is a little bit different. I hadn't been feeling good for a couple of days. I had a splitting headache and a slight fever, and there was really no other alternative. So I've just had to put my head down and push through. I helped with the math homework, got the snacks settled, did the dishes, and prepped dinner. I look at my watch, and all of a sudden, I was slightly ahead of schedule. And if I play my cards just right, I was staring down the barrel of a 20-minute nap.

So I get all that settled, and I do the thing parents do where you quietly sneak down the hall, hoping your kids don't notice. I got down the hall and got in bed, and right at that moment, before I fell asleep, I heard these little footsteps: "Dad, there's somebody at the door, and they won't go away." So, I do what any good pastor does, and that we all do in the year 2025. I just yelled back, "Ignore them. They'll go away." Because who in the world's knocking on doors in 2025? A minute or so later, the same thing. But this time, my daughter yelled from the living room, "Dad, they won't go away." At that point, I rolled over and looked at the ring camera on my phone. Lo and behold, he's not going away.

The dog's barking. My daughter's yelling, and any plan of a nap is now gone. That guy knows we're here, and he's not moving until we answer that door. So I get out of bed, pull myself together, and answer the door. "Hello, sir. Can I interest you in a once-in-a-lifetime window washing package?" I respond like I'm certain he's overselling the thing, but to his credit, I've never in my life had the offer of a window washing package. So maybe he's not all that wrong.

"You know, it's not really a good time."

"Oh, I understand, sir." And I see him peer past me. If you've been to my house, you'll know that if you look past the front door, you'll see three large windows, which have a pretty good view of the Bay and SFO

airport. So he looks through it and says, "Man, what a beautiful view. Are you sure you want it covered by those dirty windows?" I'll be honest, I'm rattled at this point. I did not expect the follow-up questions, and I certainly didn't expect the subtle jab at the cleanliness of my windows.

"You know, I'm just not really interested right now."

"No problem. I totally understand. I'll come back at a different time." Which he was embodying, in that moment, not to take no for an answer. I closed the door, turned around, and I now see my dirty windows that I didn't realize were dirty.

I would guess that the experience that I described is a little like Easter. Some of you come in here, and I'm like the door-to-door salesman. I'm knocking on your door, and you're thinking that everything is fine. You are here, but it feels like an intrusion. Some of you are here, and you're thinking the same thing. I get it. I am interrupting a lovely Sunday on your way to brunch.

You think that I seem nice enough. The music seems good enough. The church doesn't seem totally crazy. But at the end of the day, I'm here to tell you about a first-century peasant in the Roman Empire who was killed and then resurrected from the dead. Somehow, that is supposed to mean something to you. You may not be interested right now. I get it. I understand. That's how Easter can feel for some of us. I can promise to set your nerves at ease. I'm not here to sell you anything. I promise you that I won't dress the story up any more than it already is.

What I want to do this morning is simply my best attempt to retell a story that has given shape and a new trajectory to my life and so many others in here. The truth is, I really do believe in the resurrection of Jesus. I believe it is the most consequential, decisive event in all of human history. I don't believe that because I was swindled by some keen salesman who offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I believe it because I've witnessed, time and time, the transformative power of this story of the resurrection in people's lives. Many are seated in this room today.

So relax; I'm not here to sell you anything, but I do believe that every one of us in here tells a story to ourselves to make sense of the reality points of life. All of us live from story. Every single one of you in here has an image of a preferred future in which you live, leaning forward toward that particular story. My task this morning isn't to sell you the Christian one. I just simply want to pose a few reflective questions because I believe that the resurrection of Jesus actually makes sense of the data points of my life.

If you're here and Easter's just a minor holiday to you. You're on your way to brunch, and it's just the day where you have to wear more pas-tels and eat more asparagus than you typically do; you're just popping

in, I mean it from the deepest part of my heart, you're so welcome here. I'm so glad you're here. You're welcome here any other Sunday of the year, too. We're so glad that you came and chose to give up a part of your Easter Sunday this morning.

There are others of you in here in which your story might look a little bit more like mine in the way in which the resurrection has reshaped your story. At some point, it awoke something deep within you, and your life has never been the same as you came alive to the reality of the resurrection. I say he has risen. He has risen indeed. So let's hear the Easter story, but this time, maybe we should be attuned to some of the edges that we often look over.

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. Luke 24:1-3

Now, it opens on the first day of the week, which means it's the day after the Sabbath, which is the very first day that these women could have gone to the tomb. So when it says very early in the morning, on the next day, there's a sense of eagerness and anticipation. These women were waiting for the very first chance they got to go to the tomb.

They're going there carrying spices because that would've been a first-century ancient tradition, similar to us bringing flowers to a gravestone. They're bringing spices, not anticipating that they're going to show up, and it's a victorious moment. These women are arriving with spices because they want to continue the burial process. They are not filled with joy in this moment. They're filled with grief.

Resurrection Meets Us in Grief

It may surprise you, but the very first Easter morning does not start with victory. It starts with a memorial service. It starts with grief. The first point for us to understand is that resurrection meets us in grief, which is a universally shared experience. You've had experiences like this. You've had those moments in which grief breaks in. The edge of the resurrection story is that it takes place right in the midst of some of the most basic and shared raw human experiences. These women were present at the tomb because they were mourning the loss of their friend, their leader, and the very concept of hope itself. On that first Easter morning, we find the resurrection meets these first followers in that moment of grief.

While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words. Luke 24:4-8

These women show up and are expecting to see a corpse that's three days cooled over. They arrived, peered into the tomb, and the body was

gone. It's in that moment that they wondered about these things. They were perplexed. We've bought some modern myth that thinks we're more enlightened than the ancient world, but I can assure you, the ancient world believed that dead people stayed dead just as much as you and I. They were not more gullible. They showed up assuming a corpse was going to be there, but when they looked in, nothing was there. So they're wondering about this.

In the moment of their wonder, these two gleaming men like lightning show up, and the text says, "In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground," Now, typically, when you see that phrase "in their fright, they bowed down" throughout the scriptures, it's usually followed up with, "they fell to the ground and worshipped." But here, that's not there. It just says, "In their fright, the women bow down with their faces to the ground."

The fright is real. The fear is setting in. The Greek word for fright here is *aporeo*, and it means to be perplexed, to be at a loss, or in doubt. These women showed up, and these two gleaming figures appeared in the tomb. The women are just frightened, perplexed, and stunned. The term in the ancient world would often be used to talk about existential dilemmas.

The very first Easter is at hand, and these women are in grief, but they're also going through a bit of an existential crisis because dead people typically stay dead. That's what they're coming for, and these two figures look at the women, and they ask, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" That's an odd question because they're not actually looking for the living among the dead. They're looking for the dead among the dead.

They look at these women who are looking for the dead among the dead, and it's in this grieving and doubting moment that they hear the very first Easter sermon. I can assure you it's shorter and cuts to the chase a little bit quicker than I'll do this morning. But they hear these words. "He is not here. He has risen." The very first Easter sermon taught to women in the moment of grief and doubt in which they come and hear these words. Then the angel says essentially, "Why are you surprised? He told you all about this."

It has always perplexed me. These women have walked with Jesus for three years, and if you have lived with someone for three years and that person then says, "Hey, I'm going to go to Jerusalem, be arrested and crucified, but then I'll come back from the dead." Do you think you're forgetting those words? How do they forget these words? That would seem to stand out in my mind.

Resurrection Meets Us in Our Doubt

Grief blinds us. Fear blocks our senses. There are times in life in which the brokenness of this world that's riddled with death has a way of crowding out what we know is true. Death, my friends, is an intrusion. It enters into life unforeseen and unexpected without our desire in it. You've been there, I'm sure of it. You found yourself in a way in which the bottom of life seems to have dropped out, and the heaviness of life seems too much for you to carry. In those moments, you forget the

truest thing that you maybe once knew about the world—that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead.

Resurrection meets us in our grief, but resurrection also meets us in our doubts. It confronts our sensibilities. It challenges everything we've known about the world. What must have been going through their minds at this time—grief, fear, confusion. Contrary to what we understand, they weren't coming there expecting to see the resurrected Jesus. So when they arrived, they were shocked and startled.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. Luke 24:9-12

See, these women do, I think, exactly what you and I would do. Go run and tell everyone what you know about him. They do quite the natural thing. They go back to the disciples, who are huddled up in fear. Remember, Jesus was crucified as an enemy of the state, and they were associates of Jesus. So, the natural thought for them is that they could be coming after us next. They're in this upper room, they're huddled up in fear, hiding from anyone that may pose challenges and threats to them.

Then in burst these three women, "He is not there. He is risen." We can have some sympathy for the apostles. They do what we often do. It sounds like nonsense. They did not believe them. The Greek word for nonsense here is the word *leros*, and it means exactly what it is in English: nonsense, idle talk, or folly. In the ancient Greco-Roman world, rhetoric and speech were highly valued, and the ability to speak wisely and persuasively was a mark of education and social standing. So words that were considered *leros* or nonsense would be those that failed to meet the standards of generally accepted wisdom.

They'd be dismissed as trivial or unworthy of attention. So when the disciples hear this they say nonsense, because dead people stay dead. I think some of you in here are saying the same thing. It actually makes a lot of sense. Dead people stay dead. It has a pretty good track record. So when we hear these words, just like these apostles, we think that this must be absolute nonsense. I'm sympathetic if that's you in here, I get it. It does sound like nonsense.

Resurrection Meets us in our Disbelief

See, resurrection meets us in our grief. Resurrection meets us in our doubt, but resurrection also meets us in our disbelief. Resurrection, the very first one, this very first Easter Sunday, takes place amidst all of that. Some of you are saying, "Kevin, really, dead people coming back to life? It's 2025. Why don't you just send the offer of the window washing package and leave so I can get on with my life?" It's an intrusion. I guess my point here is if you find yourself here, listening to the window-washing salesman knocking on your door, and if you find yourself one

more year sitting through this Easter sermon and are filled with grief, doubt, or disbelief, you are in very good company.

Because you are not the first to feel that. In fact, this was the experience of the very first witnesses of the resurrection. And I think this room might be filled with people who have that same grief, doubt, and disbelief. What do you do with these things? How do you reconcile this in light of life and in light of the undeniable realities of the pain and hurt that we bring into this room?

I was 22 the first time I was called to pray for someone on their deathbed. I'd known Ed Denton for years. He was my youth pastor and had mentored me early on in my ministry days. But Ed's story was complicated. He was in his late thirties, and he was married with two young kids. During the few years prior to his cancer diagnosis, everything in his life seemed to be unraveling. His marriage was struggling. The church that he had worked at asked him to leave for no good reason. So he was just picking up whatever shifts he could from wherever trying to make ends meet.

It was complicated. But Ed was beloved, and Ed loved the Lord. I'll never forget I received the call. "Kevin, Ed has cancer. It's really bad. He's been admitted to the hospital." Within a matter of three short months, Ed went from someone who was full of vitality in life to someone barely hanging on. I had never walked and experienced something so abrupt, so tragic. The next phone call came. "We're not sure Ed's going to make it through the night. You need to come."

So there I found myself walking into the hospital room, witnessing the lifeless body of a man who was once filled with vitality. He was wasting away; his life was literally coming apart at the scenes, and the tension in the room was thick.

I'll be honest, I had no idea what to say. I was 22. I'd never seen someone this far along in the process of dying. So I stood there with a few others, and we shared stories. Ed shared his typical terrible jokes that we all tried to laugh at. But as we gathered there around the bedside, each of us trying to muster the words to say, trying to pray the prayers that weren't coming, the moment happened. I'll never forget it.

In walked his two kids, no older than five years old. They couldn't comprehend all that was happening. They just knew their dad was sick, and it wasn't good, and they didn't expect him to make it through the night. So, the time came for him to say goodbye. Ed looks at his kids and calls them to the bedside. "Maggie, Jason, I want you to remember these three things. I love you. Listen to your mother, and most importantly, Jesus loves you."

At that moment, I was actually a little irritated. There was nothing about this that felt like Jesus loves you. Yet, at that particular moment, a man whose life was coming undone demonstrated a faith that was unshakable. A confidence in Jesus that was resolute. How? How do you do that in the face of death? One word: resurrection. What would seem like a reasonable response at that time would be anger, fear, and confusion at the injustice of it all.

Ed was way too young, and yet when it came to a day like that when you're at the bedside, everything else is stripped away. Ed went back to the one thing he held true as reality, that this life is not over at death. His marriage was crumbling, the job taken away, and his health shattered, and yet he has the audacity to make the claim of resurrection. "I love you. Listen to your mother, and most importantly, Jesus loves you."

It was Frederick Bakner who once said, "Resurrection means the worst thing is never the last thing." Resurrection doesn't take away the suffering. It recontextualizes death. Resurrection doesn't remove the process but rather places it in its proper place in which death is a part of the journey, not the end of the journey. It doesn't dismiss suffering, but rather, it makes suffering a little bit more sufferable.

The resurrection of Jesus, whether you view it today as a true invitation, a harmless fable, or some destructive myth, takes place in rooms like that hospital room. The persistence of a faith undeterred by death itself testifies to the reality of the resurrection of Jesus. Even though Ed's body was wasting away, and he had tubes and sensors all over him, he could look his children in the eye and say, "I love you. Listen to your mother. And most importantly, Jesus loves you."

What I've learned over my years as a pastor is that it is universally and unequivocally accepted that death enters the scene as an intrusion, whether it's the tragedy of the death of someone altogether too young or the equally but different tragedy of the death of a parent of old age. Whether the tears are shed from a place of deep grief or sadness mixed with gratitude for a life well lived, there are always those moments at the memorial when death's unwelcome presence breaks through, and we feel it at our core. Something has gone tragically wrong.

We all have these questions. How do we make sense of them? What story do we tell? How do we deal with those realities? In the modern world, we've become good at distracting ourselves from them. We've found ways to just suppress them, to put them off, or to numb them with this or that, but whatever it is, we all tell ourselves a story. We all have to do something about that problem: death.

In one of C. S. Lewis' lesser-known works, *God In The Dock*, he writes, "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance, the only thing it cannot be is moderately important." The claims of resurrection are our most audacious. They are too strong. They're too grand. They are too big to claim what we claim on a morning like this to simply be blasé—life is just going on as normal. At the very center, the core of the Christian claim is resurrection. It's everything. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15, wrote,

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 1 Corinthians 15:12-14

Resurrection upends every other claim. Resurrection is the linchpin that pulls all of Christianity together. It gives shape to the life of Jesus. It's resurrection that makes the claim that Jesus is the very defeater of life's

greatest enemy, death itself. It is audacious. It is nonsensical, but it is the claim that we make because if true, well, that changes everything. It can't be moderately important. There's no chance of it.

The reality that most of us try to guard against is that we have a death problem. And if the resurrection is not true, then life just becomes a meaningless charade of a series of tragic events in which we try to guard against the imposition of nihilism—everything is meaningless. Death is our greatest enemy, and it has a pretty good track record. It wins 100 percent of the time unless there is a love that outlives death.

Resurrection means the worst thing is never the last thing. Without resurrection, there is no "He's in a better place." Without resurrection, there's no "He's free from his pain." Without resurrection, it's simply eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you die. Live and let live. Everything is meaningless. Without the resurrection, Ed's story just ends. Your story just ends. Lights go out, everything's done. Nothing remains.

This brings me to the question of those two angels at the tomb. Why do you look for the living among the dead? What are you searching for? We all feel that problem. We all understand that angst, there's something within us that rejects this problem of death. But the reality is we have to make sense of it. You can't just ignore it. What are you searching for?

For those women, they're looking for the dead among the dead. But we often are rushing around trying to find the living among the dead. See, I get it. Resurrection sounds like nonsense, but maybe my question back to you would be, is it any less nonsensical than our own vain attempts to cover up the problem of death?

We all do something to make sense of it. Every time you take another drink to suppress and numb the ache of a life that didn't turn out the way you envisioned, you're looking for the living among the dead. Every time you lapse back into addiction and feel that fleeting relief only to be left empty and wanting, every time you check your social media feed for the hundredth time, hoping for one more like, one more comment, one more view that will fill the void of genuine connection you long for, every time you throw yourself into work, sacrificing relationships and rest at the altar of achievement, hoping that this promotion will validate you, every time you buy the myth that you can find healing for all your wounds by just giving yourself to one more person, you are looking for the living, but what you're finding is you're amongst the dead. What are you searching for?

You're searching for life. You're searching for a future that's free from the pain, death, hurt, ache, and shame. It's the things we all carry. It's the doubt and disbelief. We carry it, and all of us are searching. We have a death problem, and we're searching for the living because we need to have a future in which life could make sense. What would happen if you stripped away everything you've accomplished? Are you ready to enter into the void of death without anything to guard you? Could there be a love that transcends that?

Those women lost everything. They lost their hope, their friend, everything. They were searching for the living amongst the dead. C. S. Lewis, in a different book, *Mere Christianity*, writes about this in his beautiful

chapter on hope. It's short, just a couple of pages, but he talks about how to be human is to hope, it's to live leaning forward and to have some preferred future that you are striving for and reaching for. He says there are three ways you can handle that.

The first way is to buy the myth that more of the same will resolve it. Another expensive holiday, another one-night stand, another hit, another promotion. Whatever it is, you can spend your whole life trotting from thing to thing. Always thinking maybe the next thing will truly satisfy, but you can only hold off that feeling for so long.

They deliver for a moment that's all too fleeting. You feel that release, but then you're left searching for the living amongst the dead. You've been given a heart that Ecclesiastes would say has eternity placed within it. Your desire is not the problem. It's where you're trying to satiate it. That is, you have an eternal desire within you, and you are searching amongst the finite to fill something eternal. Of course, there's a gap between the two.

Could it be that there's something more? Lewis would say the second way is to simply give into despair. Assume that desire is simply a pursuit of youth. So you give up searching and try to muster enough sense to hold nihilism back for just enough until you pass. But the problem with that is that it's awfully dehumanizing. You were created with desire. Desire is not the problem. You can numb life and just exist to this brutal experience to endure through life. But in many ways, you're just living dead. Desire is not the problem. But could there be a third way?

Resurrection breathes life into all of it. It's not the first or the second, but rather the third way in which resurrection identifies the desire, the longing within you. And listen to the way Lewis writes it.

Most people, if they had really learned to look into their own hearts, would know that they do want, and want acutely, something that cannot be had in this world. There are all sorts of things in this world that offer to give it to you, but they never quite keep their promise... If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world. C. S. Lewis

Could it be that ache that you're suppressing, that you're pushing down, is actually the very thing that testifies to the resurrection? What you are longing for is a love that transcends death. What you're longing for is something that would push through that. When Lewis says "another world," notice that he's really talking about a future; he is not talking about some disembodied place.

We've bought into this weird myth that the gospel means we're swept up out of this life and fly away to some other reality. But that's not the Christian story. The Christian story is that heaven is Earth's future, and it's crashing into this very place. The gospel is not about getting you into heaven as much as it's about getting heaven inside you. It's God moving closer, coming to this earth to restore it. God's future is the entire cosmos, redeemed and reconciled. The resurrection is the very first fruits, the beginning point, the bud on the branch that's been dormant

through winter, and the buds in the petals come out. That is the first moment the new creation crashes into this moment.

The shock of Easter morning was the resurrection, but it was also that God's future was coming into the present in the person of Jesus. That future is what you're desiring. Listen to the way John the Revelator would say this in Revelation 21. It's the very end of the scriptures. John says,

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," (The word there is a little nuance. It's more like renewed heaven and renewed earth.) for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Revelations 21:1-5a

This is the future you long for. It's the future that God has for the world. It's the future without decay, without sin, without brokenness, without war, without school shootings, with no child ever abused, where cancer's obsolete, and where the vulnerable are taken care of.

Resurrection is the definitive statement that God's new world has been birthed right here. God's new creation that was once out over the horizon has come in here. We live in the overlap of that world and this world, but the old heaven and the old earth are passing away. The new one is coming, and the testament to that is Ed looking in his children's eyes. "I love you. Listen to your mother, and most importantly, Jesus loves you."

The resurrection means the worst thing is never the last thing. The resurrection recontextualizes death and places it as part of the process. "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" A new reality, a new invitation is before every one of us. It's here. What are you searching for?

Years ago, I met a young woman named Rachel. She was a high school student who had been attending youth group for a few years. I could tell something was off. She was well-loved. The popular kid and always seemed to be the life of the party. But something just seemed a little off over the first years I got to know her.

I'd overhear her telling stories of her partying escapades, and everything looked fine on the outside, but inside, I sensed she felt hollow. She came from a broken home. Her dad was an alcoholic and eventually, years later, would drink himself to death. He was angry when he got drunk and often lashed out at anyone who was near him. This sent her into a full-on identity crisis, and to resolve it, she sought answers in all the wrong places.

She turned to the approval of guys because she couldn't find it in her father, and she tried to resolve that tension as a high scorer.

She'd eventually turned to alcohol, trying to numb the pain. She was searching for anything to make the pain stop. I prayed with her a few times. Eventually, she got to a very low point in her life in which she was open to meeting with a mentor.

I connected her with my wife, Lindsay. Over the next year, they walked together, and Lindsay carried her burdens and loved her well. One particular Saturday, after a difficult breakup with a guy who'd taken advantage of her, Lindsay took her to coffee. They sat at the table together, and Lindsay looked at her and said, "You're better than that guy. You deserve so much more than him, and God has so much more in store for you."

Rachel looked across the table and said, "What makes you think that?" Lindsay goes on to affirm her and share all the things that we see in her that she couldn't see. This young woman replies, "Well, I don't see why that'd make me deserve any more. No one out there is ever going to love me."

Lindsay leans across the table. She said, "You know, Kevin and I love you, right?" Tears form in her eyes and begin to stream down her face. After a few moments, she's still fighting back the tears, but it seems much more like the years of pent-up anger, fear, and confusion.

She looked at Lindsay and said, "No one's ever told me that before." Rachel was searching for some way to make sense of life. She was searching for resurrection, but she didn't know it. She was searching for the living, but she found herself constantly among the dead. It would take years before she got it all figured out and sorted. But at that moment, something changed, something switched, and her life went on a new trajectory. She had a small taste of resurrection. Because resurrection means the worst thing is never the last thing.

For Rachel, that meant there was a new possibility, a new life. As the years progressed, and I saw the transformation take place in her life, I don't know any other word for it but resurrection. She was once dead and is now alive. She's fallen for the Lord and found the love that she'd been searching for.

What eventually tipped the scales for Ed. What eventually tipped the scales for Rachel and what eventually tipped the scales for me, and so many of you in here, is that the way of Jesus, the resurrection, broke into the midst of whatever death we were experiencing.

You may have been searching amongst the dead for a long time, but the reality is someone, some window-washing salesman, may knock on your door and say, "Why are you searching for the living amongst the dead? There's a different way. There's a different reality." Then, when you look back on Jesus' teaching, it begins to make sense. Easter is about coming awake to the reality of resurrection right here in this life. Think of Jesus' words in Matthew 16.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? Matthew 16:25-26

You and I were sojourners through this life, searching to make sense of the reality and the data points of life. Death seems to always win and is our greatest enemy. Jesus would just pose the question, what good is it if you gain everything, yet the deepest thing is lost? What would it look like for you to give your life to receive a new one? See, the reality is you can't get to resurrection without going through death.

Resurrection doesn't abolish death. It doesn't abolish suffering. It re-contextualizes it in such a way that even though the pain is still sharp, and the sting is still there, it's a little bit more sufferable. There's a little bit more light. Like Ed when he looked at his kids and said, "I love you. Listen to your mother, and most importantly, Jesus loves you." And my wife leaning across the table saying, "You know, Kevin and I love you."

Those angels at the tomb said, "He is risen. He is not here."

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

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